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AN

EPISTLE

OF

Love and *Caution*

TO THE

Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of FRIENDS in *GREAT-BRITAIN*, or elsewhere.

By JAMES BROWN.

LONDON:

Printed and Sold by LUKE HINDE at the BIBLE in *George-Yard, Lombard-Street.*

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The TESTIMONY of Friends of *Morley* Monthly-Meeting in *Cheſhire*, concerning JAMES BROWN.

WHO was born in the Year 1679, of profeſſing Parents in the Way of the Church of *England*, but when grown to mature Age, he joined in Fellowſhip with the *Preſbyterians*, amongſt whom he continued until ſome Difference happened amongſt them concerning their Preacher, on which Occaſion he obſerved that Self-Intereſt was too prevalent, for which Cauſe he left them, and for ſome Time frequented the Meetings of the *Baptiſts*, until one of their Paſtors ſo ſtrenuouſly recommended his Hearers to Liberality in paying their Miniſter, that he again grew uneaſy; under which Exerciſe of Mind he alſo left them.

And about the Year 1715, and Thirty-ſixth of his Age, he was convinced of the *unchangeable Truth*, and joined Friends, and continuing faithful to the Manifeſtations of Divine Grace, he received a Diſpenſation of the Goſpel of Peace, in which he laboured Diligently, being often favoured with a Word in due Seaſon to help and encourage the Weak, ſtrengthen the Faithful, and edify the Church in general, earneſtly endeavouring to build up others in that moſt holy Faith which works by Love to the purifying of the Soul, and which he had received and embraced with true Sincerity and Singleneſs of Heart: His Labour of Love will not be eaſily forgot by many amongſt us. He was ready to give an Anſwer to every Man (whether Enquirer or Gainſayer) that aſked him a Reaſon of the *Hope* that was in him, with Meekneſs and Fear. He lived the Life he preached, adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour by an unblameable Converſation, being an eminent Example of that Meekneſs, Temperance, Charity, Self-denial, Humility, and Purity, which he ſo often and ſo well recommended to others: Yea his Innocence of Life, and Simplicity of

Manners was ſo remarkable, that we hope we may ſay of him, he was *blameleſs and harmleſs, without Rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe Nation, amongſt whom he ſhone as a Light in the World.* He was often ſerviceable, and well qualified, to reconcile contending Parties, and make up Differences amongſt his Friends and Neighbours. Being thus uſeful to Mankind, both in a civil and religious Capacity, and having diſcharged the ſeveral Duties and Relations of Life, both publick and private, in a commendable and acceptable Manner, he lived beloved, and died lamented by all his Friends and Acquaintance.

Phil. ii. 15.

He bore his long Illneſs with a becoming Patience and Reſignation to the Will of the great Diſpoſer of all Things, and quietly departed this Life the 12th of the Third Month 1750, and was buried at *Mobberly* the 15th of the ſame, in the Seventy-firſt Year of his Age, his Body being attended to the Grave by many Friends and Neighbours. He was a Miniſter ſeventeen Years.

Having thus fought a good Fight, finiſh'd his Courſe, and kept the Faith, we doubt not but he is gone to inherit a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the LORD the righteous Judge will give unto all them that love his Appearing.

Signed in and on the Behalf of our Monthly-Meeting held at *Stockport*, the 28th of the Ninth Month 1750.

By *John Brown* *John Leigh* *Thomas Armitt*
John Storrs *John Cale* *Daniel Bradbary*
Joſeph Hobſon *John Bancroft* *John Storrs* jun.
John Taylor jun. *Micajah Worſley* *Tho. Armitt* jun.

The above Teſtimony concerning JAMES BROWN was read and approved at our Quarterly-Meeting, held for *Cheſhire* at *Newton* near *Middlewich*, and ordered to be ſigned by

The 14th of the Tenth Month 1750.

John Merrick,
Clerk of the Meeting.

TO THE

Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of FRIENDS in *Great-Britain*, or elſewhere:

But more particularly

To the FRIENDS of *Morley* Monthly Meeting in CHESHIRE.

Dear Friends,

NOT expecting my Life here to be long, nor that I ſhall ſee you again in the Meeting, I find my Mind engaged in the Love and Life of Truth, which flows from the Fountain of all Good, to offer ſomething by Way of Counſel, Advice, and Caution, in order for your Preſervation, Growth, and Eſtabliſhment in the Way of the bleſſed and unchangeable Truth; as I have, I hope, ſincerely deſired it for every one of you while I was with you: And now expecting to take my final Farewel of you, my Deſires for you are at this Time renewed and ſtrengthened through the freſh Springs of Love and Life in my Heart to you-ward, that by you and through you the great Name of the Lord may be duly honoured and glorified.

2 Cor. xiii. 11. Rom. xii. 18. 1 Pet. iii. 11. Rom. xiv. 19. And that which chiefly lieth upon me to recommend to you is, To *live in Peace. Live in Peace, and the God of Love and Peace ſhall be with you*; yea *as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all Men*; yea there is Need *to ſeek Peace and enſue it*, and to follow after it as a precious Thing, that it may never flie from you; *follow after the Things which make for Peace, and Things wherewith one may edify another.*

John xiv. 27. When our bleſſed Lord was about to take his Leave of his Diſciples, he ſaid unto them, *Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you*; and when his Diſciples were met together after he was ariſen from the Dead, and he appeared in the Midſt, his firſt Speech to them was, *Peace be unto you*; and when he firſt ſent forth his Diſciples to preach the Goſpel of Peace, he commanded them, into whatſoever Houſe they entered, to ſay, *Peace be to this Houſe*; and if the Son of Peace was there, their Peace was to reſt upon it; but if not [mark that] their Peace was to return to themſelves: So that, although he is the Prince of Peace, and the great Peace-maker between God and Man, and himſelf preached Peace to them that are far off, and to them that are near, yet if the Son of Peace be not in that Heart to whom it is preached, his Peace will not reſt upon them; for *there is no Peace to the Wicked, ſaith my God.*

John xx. 19. Luke x. 5. Iſa. lvii. 21.

So, *Dear Friends*, let me beſeech every one of you in the Love of the Goſpel of Peace, to *follow after*

after Things which make for Peace; firſt in your own Minds, that the Son of Peace may be there; and then for Peace in your own Families. *Dear Friends*, be concerned that the Bleſſing of Peace may reſt upon all your Families, and then the God of Love and Peace will dwell with you. But that which my Soul moſt ardently deſires for you is, that you may *keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace* in the Church which is God's Family; and always bear in Mind, that he that preſides over you, and is the Maſter of your Aſſemblies, is the Prince of Peace; and he is greatly grieved when the Peace of his Family is broken; *it muſt needs be*, ſaid he, *that Offences come, but wo to that Man by whom they do come.*

Rom. xiv. 19.

Eph. iv. 3.

Mat xviii. 7.

And remember, *Friends*, it ever was, is, and will be, the Work of the Adverſary to break the *Peace* of the Church; he began this Work very early in the Church of *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs, and to bring his Purpoſe about, he blinded the Minds of ſome noted Men in the Congregation, namely, *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, to ſuch a Degree, that they could not ſee that the Lord had laid the Charge and Service of guiding, admoniſhing, and ordering his People, upon *Moſes* and *Aaron*, any more than he had upon others; and in this blind State they drew no leſs than two Hundred and fifty Men with them, that were *famous in the Congregation, Men of Renown*, and they roſe up againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron*, and ſaid, *Ye take too much upon you, ſeeing all the Congregation are holy every one of them; and wherefore then do*

Numb. xvi. 2, 3.

you

you lift up yourſelves above the Congregation of the Lord? How blind was this Spirit! Did *Moſes* lift up himſelf to this great Charge? But when the Lord laid it upon him, he complains and ſays to the Lord, *Have I conceived all this People, have I begotten them, that thou ſhouldſt ſay unto me, Carry them in thy Boſom?* And yet they charge him with taking it upon him, and lifting himſelf up. Now when *Moſes* ſent to call *Dathan* and *Abiram* to have the Matter tried, they ſaid, *We will not come up*; this was not from that *Wiſdom that is from above, pure, peaceable, gentle, and eaſy to be intreated*, to anſwer, *we will not come up*; but they ſaid, *Is it a ſmall Thing that thou haſt brought us up out of a Land flowing with Milk and Honey*, (for ſo this blind Spirit called the Land of *Egypt*) *to kill us in this Wilderneſs, except thou make thyſelf altogether a Prince over us?* And they ſaid farther, *Wilt thou put out the Eyes of theſe Men?* As much as to ſay, Cannot we ſee as well as thou? Blindneſs and Confidence ever go together, and ſuch are very apt to charge others with what is their own Condition. Did not the Adverſary work after this manner very early in the Goſpel Church, in the Days of the Apoſtles, and by Inſtruments fit for his Purpoſe, bring the eminent Apoſtle *Paul* into Diſeſteem, even in ſome of the Churches which he had planted? And did he not work after the ſame manner among the *Friends* of TRUTH, when the Goſpel-Order came to be ſettled in the Churches, and made Uſe of ſuch as might be ſaid to be *famous in the Congregation, Men of Renown*? And

Numb. xi. 12.

James iii. 17.

Numb. xvi. 13, 14.

no

no Wonder if ſuch as theſe draw others with them, and through the Work of the evil One ſtrengthen the Hands one of another in their evil Work, to deſpiſe and oppoſe the Work of the Lord in the Hands of thoſe whom he has laid it upon; ſo that many of the Lord's faithful Servants become their Butt to ſhoot at: That moſt worthy Man *George Fox* did not eſcape being unjuſtly judged by that blind Spirit. But let it be conſidered what has been the End of all ſuch who have made Diviſions, and broken the Peace of the Church, has not the Blaſt of the Lord come upon them?

Now, *Dear Friends*, is it any Wonder if the ſame Adverſary works after the ſame Manner in our Days, to make Diſturbance and break the Peace of the Church: And I can ſee no ſurer Way how this Evil can be prevented, but by every one walking in the *Light*, and in the *Truth*; or at leaſt if they are for a Time out of the Way, to bear Reproof, according to that Saying, *Let the Righteous ſmite me, it ſhall be a Kindneſs; and let him reprove me, it ſhall be an excellent Oil, which ſhall not break mine Head.* Therefore ſubmit to them that have the Rule over you in the Lord, for they are not to ſuffer Sin to lie upon their Brother unrebuked, nor are they to connive at Things that are diſhonourable to the *bleſſed Truth*; and if thoſe that are to be dealt with, will not ſubmit to the Counſel and Advice of ſuch whom the Lord concerns in his Work and Service in his Houſe, not only the *Peace* of the *Church* comes Pſal. cxli. 5.

to

to be broken, but it will be of dangerous Conſequence to themſelves. There is a remarkable Inſtance that ſtands recorded for Caution and Warning to us in our Day, and that is King *Zedekiah*, who ſent for the Prophet *Jeremiah* as if he deſired to know what the Mind of the Lord was concerning him; but when the Prophet counſelled him, or rather the LORD by the Prophet, to *go forth to the King of* Babylon's *Princes, and ſubmit himſelf, and he and his Houſe ſhould live, and he ſhould ſave the City* Jeruſalem *from being deſtroyed*: But the King not liking this Counſel, though it was from the Lord, reaſoned againſt it, and was too ſtiff to bend and comply with it; and it is likely that others like-minded might by their evil Counſel ſtrengthen him in it, but what was the Event! Was he not *taken and brought to the King of* Babylon, *and his Sons ſlain before his Eyes; and afterwards his own Eyes put out, and he bound with Chains and carried to* Babylon, *and kept in Priſon till he died, and the City* Jeruſalem *burned with Fire?* I believe the LORD doth as certainly give Counſel through his Servants in our Days, for the well ordering of his People, and for any to reject his Counſel, and be too ſtiff to bend, is the Way to have the Eyes of their Underſtanding darkened, and if they perſiſt therein, never to be at Liberty in the *Truth* whilſt they live.

Jer. xxxviii. 17.

Jer. xxxix. v. 7.

Now when the LORD was pleaſed to convince and ſatisfy the whole Congregation of *Iſrael*, who they were that muſt come near to him, and whom he would employ in his Service, he directed

rected for a chief Man of every Tribe to bring *a Rod, and* Moſes *was to write every Man's Name upon his Rod, and upon* Levi's *Rod was written the Name of* Aaron; *and* Moſes *laid up the Rods before the* Lord, *and on the Morrow when* Moſes *went to fetch the Rods, they were to take every Man his Rod; and behold* Aaron's *Rod budded, and bloſſomed, and brought forth ripe Almonds*: A wonderful Work of God! effectually to convince them whom he would chuſe to come near to himſelf, and in a more eſpecial manner to communicate his Mind unto. So likewiſe the Lord is pleaſed in our Days, to make known who they are whom he chuſes to make Uſe of in the Congregation of his People, for the carrying on of his Work, and that is thoſe who not only diligently attend Meetings, but are favoured with Life in the Meeting, have the *Buds* and *Bloſſoms* of *Life* upon them; and thereby come to be concerned at Heart that God may be glorified, and the Profeſſion of *Truth* kept blameleſs; and whether theſe be Elder or Younger, Poor or Rich, Male or Female, they are to be heard. And my Deſire is, that the Number of ſuch may be increaſed, both in *Morley* Meeting and elſewhere, and that they may be made a Strength and an Encouragement one to another in the Lord's Work. And though it is poſſible ſome of theſe may, like *Moſes*, under a great Preſſure and Provocation from the People, ſpeak unadviſedly with their Lips, which to be ſure will be made a great Handle of, and the wily Adverſary will reaſon ſtrongly in thoſe poor Minds who are moſt addicted Numbs xvii. 7, 8, 9.

addicted to oppoſe the LORD's Work: Yet my Deſire is, that thoſe who are concerned in his Work, may be careful to give the Adverſary of *Truth* no Handle at all to take hold of; but may ever have on the *Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit*, and not only act in that Wiſdom which is from above, but even in the Meekneſs of that Wiſdom, that ſo, if poſſible, they that are out of the Way may be gained upon; rather ſoftened than hardened; rather brought nearer than ſet further off; remembring that the firſt and great End of Diſcipline is, *to ſeek out the ſtraying and loſt Sheep, and*, if poſſible, *to bring it back to the Fold*. For as I ſaid before, the true Unity and Fellowſhip ſtands in our *walking in the Light*, according to the Apoſtle's Saying, *If we walk in the Light as he is in the Light, we have Fellowſhip one with another*; and the *Peace* of the Church continues, and Brotherly Love continues; and *how amiable is it for Brethren to dwell together in Unity*. But if any walk out of the *Light*, then the Seed of the Serpent comes to bear Rule, and ſo far there comes to be Enmity raiſed in the Mind againſt the *Light*, and them that dwell in it.

1 John i. 7.

Pſal. cxxxiii. 1.

Dear Friends, my Deſire is, that not one of you might be at all tinctured with that Spirit, which has ſo often appeared to oppoſe the LORD's [illegible] in the Hands of thoſe whom he is pleaſed [illegible]cern in it.

I have

I have alſo in the Time of my Illneſs, when the LORD has been near to my Comfort, had a freſh Sight and Senſe of the Greatneſs and Excellency of the Work of *Truth*, and how great and excellent a Change it makes in them that receive it in the Love of it; but it is to be lamented, that too many of them that profeſs the *Truth*, do not grow up in the Nobility of it as they might and ſhould do, but ſit down under a partial Work, and *are like a Cake not turned*, as the Prophet complained, baked but on one Side; ſome are alſo in a dwarfiſh State, and many other States might be mentioned that hinder *Sion* from ſhining in her Beauty, as ſhe might otherwiſe do, and the great Work which the LORD hath begun in the Earth doth not appear ſo excellent before other People as it might. Many of thoſe that ſettle in theſe poor low States, are of the Middle-aged, and ſome are grown far into Years, who for the Time they have had in the LORD's Vinyard, might have grown up to have been as Fathers and Mothers in *Iſrael*; but alas! they ſeem to think it enough if they take Care of themſelves, and in ſome Meaſure keep themſelves from Blame; ſo that the Weight and Care of the LORD's Work in many Places lies but on a very few. Hoſ. vii. 8.

Now as the great HUSBANDMAN, whoſe Huſbandry we are, has been wanting in nothing that every one of his Trees and Plants might grow and be fruitful to the Praiſe of his own great Name; and as the ſkilful Huſbandman takes Care to make the barren Ground fruitful, and to order his

vants in the doing of it: So our great HUSBANDMAN, and LORD, and LAWGIVER, among other Things that he has done to make us fruitful, and to be a precious People to himſelf, how often has he laid a Concern upon his faithful Servants when met together at the *Yearly Meeting* from all Parts of the Nation, to counſel, adviſe, and recommend to all Families of *Friends*, to ſit down together at proper Times and Seaſons to wait upon him, with very excellent Inſtructions relative thereto? I ſay, how often has this Advice and Counſel been renewed, one Time after another in our *Yearly Epiſtles?* And can we think, that he whoſe Eye is over his People for Good, and expects Obedience to what he requires, doth not take a ſtrict View over all the Families of his People, to ſee how they put his Counſel into Practice? And yet I am doubtful, too many live in the Neglect of it.

And I believe this Neglect to be one great Reaſon why ſo many live in ſo poor and barren a State as they do, who, becauſe they have not been in the Practice hereof, are not willing to alter their Way, nor change their Practice; for no doubt but there is ſomething of a Croſs to be taken up, and many letting and hindering Things will preſent themſelves, all which might be made to give Way through the LORD's Help, if there be but a willing Mind. I wiſh they that live in the Neglect of it, would conſider the Benefit that might redound to them and their Families by it. I have ſeen at ſuch a Time of ſetting down in a Family,

Family, that Children of nine or ten Years of Age have been tendred, when a few Words have been directed to them ſuitable to their Conditions. And I knew a Friend in the Compaſs of our own Meeting, who aſcribed his Recovery out of a poor, low, lifeleſs Condition, to his being adviſed to ſet up this Practice in his Family, and afterwards he became a very honourable Member in the Meeting; and it is likely there may be ſuch Inſtances in other Places.

I have to believe, that he that has ſo often called for this at our Hands, would be near to miniſter Life and Ability of Mind beyond our Expectation, as there is a patient, humble Waiting upon him. And moreover, the more this is put in Practice, the more it would remove that Reproach that other People have caſt upon us, *viz.* That we have no Religion or Worſhip in our Families from one Year's End to another, which I believe has been a Stumbling-block in the Way of ſome Enquirers. A few Words cannot ſet forth all the Benefit that might be reaped by it.

Now although I am one of the meaneſt of the Lord's Servants, and one of the weak and fooliſh Things that he is pleaſed to make Uſe of in his Houſe, yet I can ſay, this Thing has been with ſome Degree of Life and Strength upon my Mind to offer anew to your ſerious Conſideration, deſiring that the hindmoſt of the Flock might be helped forward, and that the Aged and Middle-

Aged

Aged might not be in the Way of the young and rising Generation, for want of being good Examples before them.

And still not knowing but this may be the last Service that I may have to do on *Truth*'s Behalf, I take Leave, with my Heart full of unfeigned Love, and with Desires that my Heavenly Father hath raised in me for the Prosperity of his great and blessed Works of *Truth* and *Righteousness* in the Earth.

So, *Dear Friends, Brethren* and *Sisters*, to the LORD I leave you, to the never-failing *Word of his Grace I commend you, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among all them which are sanctified*. And so I bid you Farewell in the LORD, who am

Your Friend and Brother,

Cheadle-Bulkley, *the* 12*th of the Twelfth Month* 1749. JAMES BROWN.

FINIS.